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THE READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS OF FLORIDA INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING--1966-67.

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QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED TO 53 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT AND CONTENT OF READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS (RIP) OFFERED IN THE FALL OF 1966 INDICATED THAT AS OF SEPTEMBER, 1966, 79 PERCENT, OR 37 SCHOOLS, OF THE 53 INSTUTUTIONS HAD SUCH A PROGRAM, WHILE 21 PERCENT, OR 10 SCHOOLS, DID NOT. SURVEY RESULTS ALSO SHOWED THAT OF THE 10 NO-RIP SCHOOLS, SEVEN WANTED TO HAVE SUCH A PROGRAM. APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF THE 37 RIP SCHOOLS STARTED THEIR PROGRAMS IN 1962 OR LATER, AND THE OTHER HALF STARTED BETWEEN 1950 AND 1961. THE ENGLISH AND GUIDANCE DEPARTMENTS CONTROLLED MORE OF THE PROGRAMS THAN DID THE READING AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS. ALMOST ONE-HALF OF THE RIP SCHOOLS GAVE ACADEMIC CREDITS AND CHARGED REASONABLE FEES. THE TYPICAL PROGRAM MET 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK DURING THE TERM. ABOUT 59 FULL-TIME AND 41 PART-TIME INSTRUCTORS WERE INVOLVED IN 36 PROGRAMS. APPROXIMATELY 8,357 STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED IN 35 PROGRAMS. MECHANICAL AIDS, PACERS, CONTROLLED READERS, FILMS, TACHISTOSCOPES, WORKBOOKS, AND BOXED MATERIALS WERE USED IN MOST PROGRAMS BY GROUPS OR BY INDIVIDUALS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL READING CONFERENCE (TAMPA, NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 2, 1967). (NS)

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THE READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS OF FLORIDA INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING: 1966-67

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1929, there have been over fifty surveys made regarding the content and extent of reading improvement programs (RIPs) in the United States (2). This study consisted of a mailed survey which attempted to determine the extent and content of the RIPs existing in Florida in the fall of 1966. The study was patterned after those of Lowe (1), and Thurston, Lowe, and Hayden (3).

As of September 1966, There were fifty-three institutions of higher learning in Florida. These schools included; universities, colleges, junior colleges, community colleges, branches of colleges, and special schools such as engineering, service and law schools not adjacent to parent schools. Forty-seven or 89 per cent of the schools replied to the survey while six or 11 per cent did not. Of the forty-seven replying, thirty-seven or 79 per cent had a RIP while ten or 21 per cent did not. The findings of the study were based on thirty-six usable questionnaires.

SCHOOLS NOT OFFERING RIPS

Of the ten schools not offering a RIP to their students, three asked a total of ten questions concerning the implementation of a RIP. The questions were:

*With the assistance of Nancy Bransford and Gloria Will

1. Whom should the program serve? (1)
2. Should credit be given? (1)
3. Who should pay for program? (1)
4. How long should the program last? (1)
5. What screening methods should be used? (2)
6. How should progress be measured? (1)
7. What types of approaches could be used? (1)
8. How could a RIP be integrated into an extant composition course? (1)
9. How should materials be organized? (1)

Seven of the ten schools stated that they desired having a RIP but seven schools were not planning to commence a RIP in the near future. Two schools had offered programs at one time. The reasons for discontinuance of the program were: "It was a commercial service from the outside, and I feel it to be both expensive and of small accomplishment." "Teacher who qualified left and no replacement was found."

SCHOOLS OFFERING RIPS

Of the thirty-six schools offering a RIP, fourteen asked twenty-three questions concerning the starting and improving of a RIP. The questions were:

1. How should program be organized? (2)
2. What should be taught? (1)
3. What tests should be used? (1)
4. What results do other teachers get? (1)
5. What motivation techniques are useful? (1)
6. How are listening skills developed? (1)
7. What is the relation of speech to reading? (1)
8. How many materials are needed? (1)
9. How may rapid reading, typing and dictation equipment be used to facilitate study and library assignment? (1)
10. Should the course be credit or non credit? (1)
11. What students should be enrolled in a developmental reading course? (1)
12. What instruments are desirable? (1)

13. How can large numbers of students be handled on an individual basis? (2)
14. What are some screening techniques? (1)
15. How does one set up homogeneous groups? (1)
16. What is the difference between "Directed Studies Courses" and "English Techniques of Reading Courses"? (2)
17. To what extent should outside work (homework) be assigned in a non credit course? (1)
18. Discuss grading and evaluation of students (1)
19. What about visual screening and local eye specialists? (1)
20. Is there Federal aid for community reading centers? (1)

YEAR RIP WAS STARTED

Year	Number of Schools
1966	6
1965	6
1964	2
1963	2
1962	1
1961	5
1960	4
1958	4
1957	1
1954	1
1952	1
1950	1
No Answer	3

DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION CONTROLLING OR SPONSORING RIP

Department	Number of Programs
English (Humanities)	13
Guidance	5
Education	5
Guided/Directed Studies	4
Reading	3
Communications	3
Dean	2
No Answer	2

There were sixteen schools offering a RIP to persons other than their students. The other groups mentioned were adults, secondary students, and elementary school children.

Academic credit was given by sixteen schools. The departments awarding credit are listed below:

Department	Number of Programs
English	6
Guided and Directed Studies	4
Communications	3
Reading	2
Education	1

There were fifteen programs for which a fee was charged. The costs are given below:

Cost	Number of Programs
No Answer	17
Regular semester hour fee	6
No fee	5
$45.00	2
$41.00	1
$30.00	1
$21.00	1
$10.00	3
$ 3.00	1

Because the question regarding the fees was not stated clearly, some additional, unsolicited information was given by some respondents regarding the cost of the reading program in terms of teacher's salaries, materials, etc. Specific amounts mentioned were as follows:

$150,000.00
$ 30,000.00
$ 12,370.00
$ 6,500.00
$ 4,000.00

The next three questions dealt with the length of class sessions, number of class meetings a week, and the duration of the program. The data reported are for thirty-five schools and are given below:

Class Length	Meetings Per Week	Duration of Program	Number of Schools
1 hour	3	Sem/Tri/Qt	18
1 hour	1	Sem/Tri/Qt	2
1 hour	2	Sem/Tri/Qt	4
1½ hours	2	Sem/Tri/Qt	1
2 hours	2	Sem/Tri/Qt	2
1 hour	5	Sem/Tri/Qt	1
1 hour	3	9 weeks	1
1 hour	2 or 3	7-11 weeks	1
2 hours	1	10 weeks	1
1 hour	5 every two weeks	16 weeks	1
1 hour	3	No set length	3
1 hour	4	No set length	1
No response	-	-	1

The number of full and part-time instructors was as follows:

Full Time	Part Time	Number of Programs
18	9	1
6	0	1
3	2	1
3	1	1
2	4	1
2	1	1
2	0	4
1	6	1
1	2	1
1	1	5
1	0	10
0	2	2
0	1	7
No response	-	1
Total 59	41	

When asked how many students were involved in the various RIPs, the numbers given were as follows for Fall, 1966:

Number of Students (approx)	Number of Schools
2,228	1
700-800 (750)	1
640	1
500	1
320	1
300	1
250	2
200-250 (225)	1
228	1
224	1
206	1
200	3
180	1
150 (+)	1
125	2
120	1
119	1
115	1
95	1
77	1
72	1
70	1
60-72 (66)	1
60	1
51	1
50	1
45	1
41	1
30	1
25	1
20	1
Total 8,357 Students (No response received from two schools)	Total 35 Schools

The next question asked what materials were used in the programs and for specific brand names where possible. The general results were as given below for thirty-six schools:

Material Used	Different Types	Number of Programs
Pacers	5	28
Tachistoscopes	11	29
Reading Films	8	33
Workbooks	26	32
Reading Tests	11	34
Other Tests	28	26
Other Materials	37	29

The listings which follow name the specific materials used and the number of programs using them:

Pacer	Number of Programs
SRA Accelerators	12
EDL Skimmer	9
AVR Rateometer	7
LIC Shadowscope	5
Accelerators	2

Tachistoscopes	Number of Programs
EDL Tach X	10
EDL Flash X	6
PDL Perceptoscope	3
AVR Eye Span	2
Keystone Flashmetor	1
Speed 'O Scope	1
"A Card"	1
Lafayette Tachistoscope (Psychotechnics)	2
No brand name given	2

Reading Films	Number of Programs
Educational Developmental Laboratories	28
Craig Reader	5
Perceptoscope	4
Harvard	2
Iowa	2
Program for Achievement in Reading	2
Purdue	2
Percepmatic	1

Reading Tests	Number of Programs
Triggs: Diagnostic Reading Tests	17
Brown: Nelson Denny Reading Test	10
California Reading Test	4
Davis Reading Test	3
Gates Reading Survey	3
Iowa Silent Reading Tests	3
California Achievement Test	1
Co-op English Test	1
"Craig"	1
McDonald: Reading Versatility Test	1

Other Types of Tests	Number of Programs
California Study Methods Survey	3
Keystone Visual Survey	3
School and College Achievement Tests (SCAT)	3
Kuder Preference Record	2
Teacher Made Tests	2
Stanford-Binet	2
Sequential Tests of Educational Programs (STEP)	2
Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)	2

The following tests were used in one program only: Audiometer, California Phonics Survey, College Quotient Test, Craig, Otis Beta, Otis Gamma, Orthorater, Purdue English, Strong Vocational, Tyler Study, Watson-Glazer, and tests to be used with films, etc.

The workbooks and other materials used in the programs were quite varied. The list which follows gives the names and/or titles of the materials and the number of programs using them:

Workbooks/Materials	Number of Programs
SRA Reading Labs	19
SRA Reading for Understanding	7
Reader's Digest Skill Builders	7
EDL Labs	6
Art of Efficient Reading (Spache and Berg)	5
Learning to Learn (E. P. Smith)	5
Toward Reading Comprehension (Sherbourne)	5
Texts used in regular classes	4
Periodicals and Magazines	4
Breaking the Speed Barrier (Gilbert)	4
Be a Better Reader (N. B. Smith)	4
Better Reading Books (Simpson)	4
Test Lessons in Reading (McCall-Crabbs)	4
Read with Speed and Precision (Leedy)	3
Efficient Reading (Brown)	3
Power and Speed in Reading (Gilbert)	2
How to Study (SRA)	2
English 3200	2
Efficient Study (F. W. Robinson)	2
How to Become a Better Reader (Witty)	2
How to Improve your Reading (Witty)	2
Reading Comprehension Exercises (Triggs)	2

Numerous other materials were mentioned once with the total being thirty-eight, and the overall total being sixty.

Many of the respondents gave additional information about their RIPs. Of note was the comment of many instructors as to the "individualized" nature of their RIP. Thirty-six schools having RIPs returned usable questionnaires.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The fact that at least seventy per cent of the institutions of higher learning of the State of Florida reported having some type of RIP would seem to imply that college students ask for and/or need help in reading college materials. This finding would seem to show an interest in student welfare on the part of administrative and teaching personnel. Of the ten schools not currently offering a RIP, seven desired one. This finding was an encouraging one. Another positive note was the finding that all schools having a RIP controlled it themselves. The questions asked by RIP and NO-RIP schools were intelligent and timely. Almost half the RIP schools started their RIPs in 1962 or later, and conversely the other half had RIPs started during 1950 to 1961. English and Guidance departments controlled about one-half the RIPs with Reading and Education only directing eight RIPs. Nearly one-half of the RIPs gave academic credit with English departments leading. The listing of the cost to the student for RIPs showed reasonable fees being charged. The predominant type of RIP met three times

a week for a term's duration or twice a week for one and one-half hours for a term. Many other plans were given. There were fifty-nine full-time and forty-one part-time instructors involved in the thirty-six RIPs for which data were available. There were approximately 8,357 students in the Fall, 1966 RIPs of thirty-five schools. Most of the RIPs used some type of mechanical aids and these machines were used with some type of grouping arrangement. Many RIPs used pacers, and controlled readers were used individually also. Controlled readers, reading films, and tachistoscopes were used in almost all the RIPs. Workbooks and other materials were used by most RIPs with sixty different items being mentioned. The "lab" or "boxed" materials seemed to be most popular.

There were many different reading and other tests used by the respondents. An interesting finding was that seventeen RIPs were using a reading test which some research has shown to contain non-comparable forms. This test has been studied by numerous researchers, some of whom have made the same finding; i.e. the test could not be validly and reliably used to evaluate progress in a RIP. Mr. Leslie F. Coates of St. Petersburg Junior College has made a study of this test and has reviewed the research on it also. The results of that study were presented at this conference. This writer is sure that Mr. Coates will be happy to discuss his findings with all who care to contact him.

As in the past, the respondents to the survey cooperated in a manner befitting professionals. Much credit is due them for taking the time to complete the questionnaires. The writer is grateful to them. A national survey will be conducted soon and it is hoped that the nation-wide responses will equal those of the Floridians in percentage of returns.

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